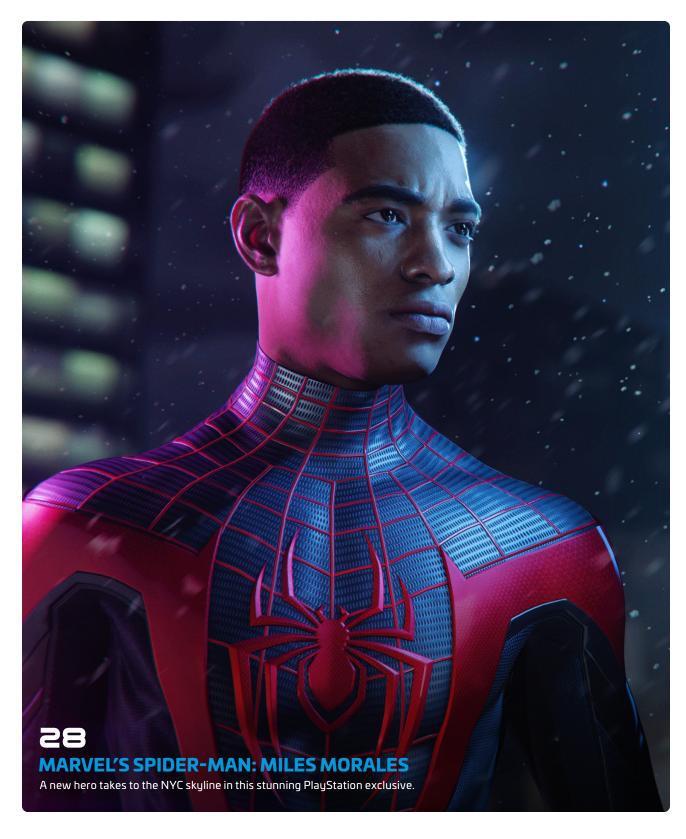






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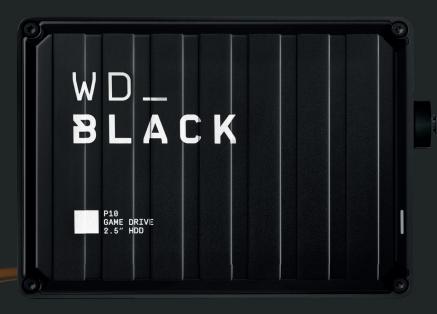
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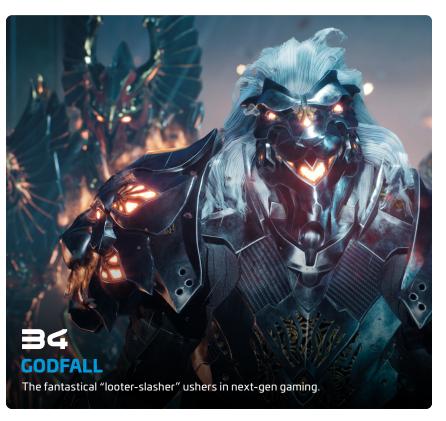
HITMAN 3 42



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GOTHAM KNIGHTS









Spending time together as a family, that's our way to play.



















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welcome

FROM THE EDITORS



fter years of waiting and speculation, the table is finally set for a next-gen showdown. This November, both Sony's PlayStation 5 and Microsoft's Xbox Series X and S will arrive in stores—just two days apart, in fact. You can check out more details on the launches in our news section, but we thought it was fitting to kick the issue off with a look at how this generational shift will be a little different from those of the past.

While there's no question that Microsoft and Sony will each work hard to make sure their respective console is the best-selling, the "console wars" narrative certainly

doesn't have the cachet it once did. With the advent of cross-platform multiplayer in many huge games like *Call of Duty* and *Fortnite*, players on one system are increasingly less and less locked in to a single community. While each console still has its own exclusive games—don't expect to play *Uncharted* on an Xbox or *Halo* on a PlayStation in this lifetime—there's a much greater sense that the gaming community is bigger than any one platform. Why worry about competition and sales numbers when we can all focus on having fun together?

You can spot another big difference in this console transition when you look at the games we're covering in this issue. For the first time, every single game in our previews section will launch on next-generation consoles. But that doesn't mean that the current console generation is done. All but one of those previewed games will also come to current consoles. Some have already confirmed they'll allow players to upgrade from a current-gen copy of the game to next-gen at no extra cost.

Take our cover game, Marvel's Spider-Man: Miles Morales. You'll be able to experience this new chapter in Insomniac's web-slinging universe on either PlayStation 5 or PlayStation 4, though the PS5 version will of course look better and load faster. But Sony will also offer a way for anyone who buys the game on PS4 to upgrade to the PS5 edition for free whenever they make the leap to next-gen. Increasingly widespread offers like that, combined with support for backward compatibility from both the Xbox Series consoles and PS5,

The "console wars"

narrative certainly

doesn't have the

cachet it once did.

mean this generational transition will be smoother than ever even if you don't leap in right away.

Elsewhere in the issue, you can check out previews of other

cross-gen games Hitman 3, Yakuza: Like a Dragon, and Gotham City Knights. We've also got an in-depth look at the "looter-slasher" Godfall, which is the only game that's skipping current consoles—it'll only be arriving on PlayStation 5 and PC later this year.

As the next generation gets underway, be sure to keep reading *Walmart Gamecenter*, the magazine that keeps you at the center of all things gaming.

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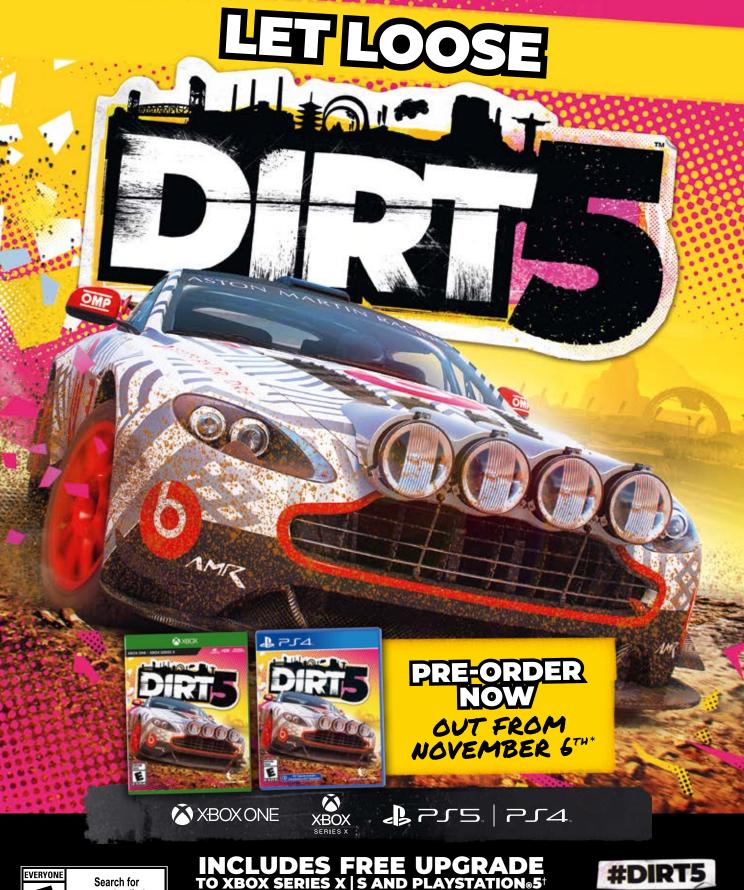
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*XBOX SERIES X/S LAUNCH DATE IS NOVEMBER 10TH. PLAYSTATION 5 LAUNCH DATE TO BE CONFIRMED.

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GAMING NEWS, NUMBERS & GOSSIP

FOUR NEW CONSOLES,

INFINITE POSSIBILITIES

ver the last seven years, the PlayStation 4 and Xbox One have offered players around the globe incredible worlds never before possible in video games. With their mid-generation updates, the PlayStation 4 Pro and Xbox One X, both systems pushed gaming into even higher-definition 4K, giving a taste of graphics to come in the future.

Now, that future is almost here. As you read this issue, we're less than a month away from the launch of the two most powerful pieces of video game hardware to ever exist: the PlayStation 5 and Xbox Series X. Actually, make that *four* pieces of hardware.

As the next chapter of a story that started almost 26 years ago, the PlayStation 5 is a marvel of technical







design. Built around a modern-era CPU and GPU, the PS5 can render games in true 4K with ease, enhanced by additional features such as framerates of 120 frames per second and advanced, ray-traced lighting. Deciding which PlayStation 5 to pick up isn't too difficult: Both the main console, and its counterpart the PlayStation 5 Digital Edition, are built using the exact same

hardware. The only difference is a lack of an optical drive on the Digital Edition—well, that, and a lower price. (As always, you can check Walmart.com for the latest price info.)

Meanwhile, Microsoft is taking a somewhat different approach to next-generation gaming. The Xbox Series X is very similar to the PlayStation 5 in terms of hardware, capable of gorgeous Ultra HD visuals, incredible framerates, and nearly non-existent load times thanks to high-speed SSD storage. However, Microsoft also has another console soon to hit the market: the Xbox Series S. While it too is a true next-generation system, capable of playing all of the same games the Xbox Series X can, it does so at lower resolutions—up to 1440p—and also without an optical drive. The benefit to its lower-powered technology? A much lower price tag that makes it the most affordable of the four.

No matter what you're looking for from the new generation of video games, Sony and Microsoft are offering up an array of choices to fit your preferences and budget. The Xbox Series X and Xbox Series S launch on November 10th, while the Play-Station 5 and PlayStation 5 Digital Edition launch two days later on November 12. To learn more about each console, and secure your own as we count down the days until launch, check out Walmart.com or your local Walmart store.

100

Years Hyrule Warriors: Age of Calamity is set before the events of The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild

12 vs. 12

Players that will be facing off in *Call of Duty: Black Ops Cold War's* new Combined Arms competitive mode

\$1,000,000

Amount donated to charity by G2 Esports, Aimlab, and streamers Ninja and MrBeast in exchange for getting to design four special costumes in Fall Guys

26

Number of new survival maps now officially added to *Left 4 Dead 2* thanks to work done by the fan community

Number of episodes in Crunchyroll and Adult Swim's upcoming Shenmue: The Animation TV series



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TRANSFORMERS: BATTLEGROUNDS

OUTRIGHT GAMES / XBOX ONE, PS4, SWITCH

COBRA KAI: THE KARATE KID SAGA CONTINUES
GAMEMILL ENTERTAINMENT / XBOX ONE, PS4,

WORLD OF WARCRAFT: SHADOWLANDSACTIVISION BLIZZARD / PC, MAC

WATCH DOGS LEGIONUBISOFT / XBOX ONE, PS4, PC

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BAKUGAN: CHAMPIONS OF VESTROIA
WR GAMES / SWITCH



G CODEMASTERS / XBOX ONE, PS4, PC

FAW PATROL MIGHTY PUPS
OUTRIGHT GAMES / XBOX ONE, PS4, SWITCH

ASSASSIN'S CREED VALHALLA
UBISOFT / XBOX SERIES X, XBOX ONE, PS4. PC

YAKUZA: LIKE A DRAGON
SEGA / XBOX SERIES X, XBOX ONE, PS4

GEARS TACTICS

XBOX GAME STUDIOS / XBOX SERIES X,
YBOY ONE



NVIDIA UNVEILS A POWERFUL NEW GENERATION OF PC GPUS

If you've been looking to take your PC gaming to the next level, then good news: Nvidia has unveiled its GeForce RTX 30-Series GPUs, and they promise some serious advancements over their predecessors.

Powered by the Nvidia Ampere architecture, the GeForce RTX 3090, 3080, and 3070 GPUs "offer up to 2x the performance and 1.9x the power efficiency over the previous Turing-based generation" according to Nvidia. These new cards build on the second generation of Nvidia RTX to provide huge boosts in areas such as realtime ray tracing and Al computation. Coming in at three different price and power levels, these new GeForce RTA 30-Series GPUs cover everyone from the gamer



looking for a reasonably priced boost to professionals working on high-end video or rendering projects.

"[The] launch of Nvidia Ampere GPUs is a giant step into the future," said Nvidia founder and CEO Jensen Huang as part of the announcement. "Twenty years from now, we'll look back and realize that the future of gaming started here."

If you're looking to upgrade your rig with the latest in Nvidia's GPUs, or looking to get set up with an entirely new gaming PC, check out all of the options available on Walmart.com or at your local Walmart store.

OCULUS LAUNCHES QUEST 2, A HIGH-END STANDALONE VR HEADSET

During a recent event, Facebook Technologies unveiled the Oculus Quest 2, the next generation of its all-in-one VR devices.

Building on the goal of the original Oculus Quest, the Quest 2 unlocks all of the excitement of virtual reality without the need of expensive additional hardware.

While it may carry on those same goals, the Oculus Quest 2 certainly isn't its older sibling. The headset is now powered by the Qualcomm Snapdragon XR2 Platform, and will offer a higher-resolution display capable of faster framerates, improved Al, and 6GB of RAM. Along with the Oculus Quest 2, you'll also be able to pick up a new version of the Touch controllers featuring better ergonomics, optimized controller

tracking, and much longer battery life.

Even better, you can now get a taste of the Oculus Quest 2 experience thanks to a special partnership with Walmart. Now, at Walmart retail stores and Walmart Esports Arena locations across the country, you can try out the Quest 2 and new Touch controllers at special demo stations. To learn more about where to test the Oculus Quest 2, check out Walmart.com or inquire at your local Walmart store.



CELEBRATE MARIO'S 35TH ANNIVERSARY IN A VARIETY OF NEW WAYS

Thirty-five years ago, a game was released in Japan that would go on to shape the future of our favorite hobby in ways its creators never could have imagined. That game? Super Mario Bros. for the Nintendo Family Computer (or, as we know it here in the United States, the Nintendo Entertainment System).

To help celebrate the 35th anniversary of everyone's favorite plumber, Nintendo is offering up a number of exciting limited-time products that look back across the history of the *Super Mario Bros.* series.



First up is Super Mario 3D All-Stars, a special new release for the Nintendo Switch that brings together newly optimized versions of three classic Mario games: Super Mario 64 from the Nintendo 64, Super Mario Sunshine from the Nintendo GameCube, and Super Mario Galaxy from the Nintendo Wii. As this special release will only be available until March 31st of next year, be sure to pick it up before it's too late.

Also in limited release will be Game & Watch: Super Mario Bros., a new col-

lectible device that mimics the design of Nintendo's original Game & Watch first released back in 1980. This new handheld will include the NES version of Super Mario Bros., Super Mario Bros.: The Lost Levels, and a special remake of the original Game & Watch version of Ball. Game & Watch: Super Mario Bros. will also feature a full-color screen, modern D-pad, and a special Mario-themed clock function. Set for release on November 13th, Game & Watch: Super Mario Bros. will also be a limited-time release, so you'll want to snag it soon.

Finally, early next year, Nintendo will be releasing Super Mario 3D World + Bowser's Fury, a special new version of the Wii U release upgraded for the Nintendo Switch. And when Super Mario 3D World + Bowser's Fury hits on February 21st, 2021, you'll also be able to buy new Cat Mario and Cat Peach amiibo figures.

To find out how to get your hands on these limited-time Mario 35th Anniversary releases, pre-order *Super Mario 3D World + Bowser's Fury*, or learn about the other products Nintendo is working on in celebration of its beloved mascot, visit Walmart. com or your local Walmart store.





DON'T LEAVE THOSE CURRENT GAMES BEHIND

With the upcoming launches of the Xbox Series X/S and PlayStation 5, gamers everywhere are excited for a whole new generation of video games that make use of the latest and greatest technology. However, waiting for those new consoles can also mean wondering if it's a good time to buy all of the fantastic titles still coming out for the Xbox One and PlayStation 4.

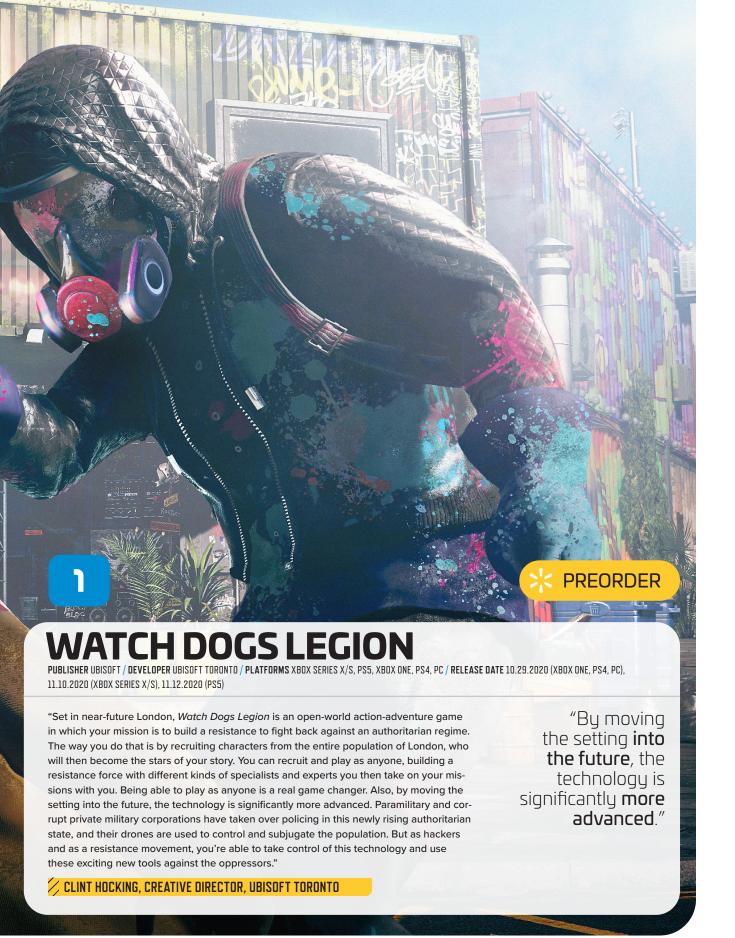
Thankfully, a number of publishers and developers are working hard to make that decision easier. Numerous games both already released and still coming soon will not only be getting next-gen upgrades, but many of those upgrades will be offered to those who already own the current versions of those games.

Even better, that jump will often come at no cost. New releases such as Assassin's Creed Valhalla, Cyberpunk 2077, DIRT 5, Marvel's Avengers, and WRC 9, as well as classics such as The Witcher 3, Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six Siege, and Destiny 2, will all allow you access to their next-generation versions for free. Meanwhile, some games like Madden NFL 21 can be upgraded for a limited time, while others like Call of Duty: Black Ops Cold War and NBA 2K21 will offer free upgrades depending on the version of the game you buy.

So, no matter if you'll be making the jump to a new console soon, or sometime farther down the road, you can feel safe knowing that many of the games you buy today will be even better tomorrow. To find out which games offer upgrades, and pick up your own copies, check out Walmart.com or visit your local Walmart store.

november zozo





november 2020



PIKMIN 3 DELUXE

PUBLISHER NINTENDO / DEVELOPER MONOLITH SOFT, NINTENDO EAD / PLATFORMS SWITCH / RELEASE DATE 10.30.2020

"Pikmin are intelligent, plant-like creatures that come in a variety of colors, each with special attributes. When the player gives them a simple order, they will carry things, move obstacles, and even battle other creatures. This game is all about the joy of discovery. How can I best use Pikmin to help the whole squad progress? The original *Pikmin 3* expanded on the original games by telling the story of three space explorers who crash on the planet. Players got to balance tasks between crew members and Pikmin in this colorful alien world while searching for food to bring back to their home planet. For its launch on Switch, we wanted to make the game more welcoming to players new to the series by adding new difficulty options, lock-on targeting, and some optional hints. You can also now play the Story mode in co-op, and this has new side-story missions featuring Olimar and Louie."

"This game is all about the **joy of discovery**. How can I best use **Pikmin** to help the **whole squad progress**?"

COREY OLCSVARY, TREEHOUSE PRODUCT MARKING LEAD, NINTENDO OF AMERICA





SWITCH.



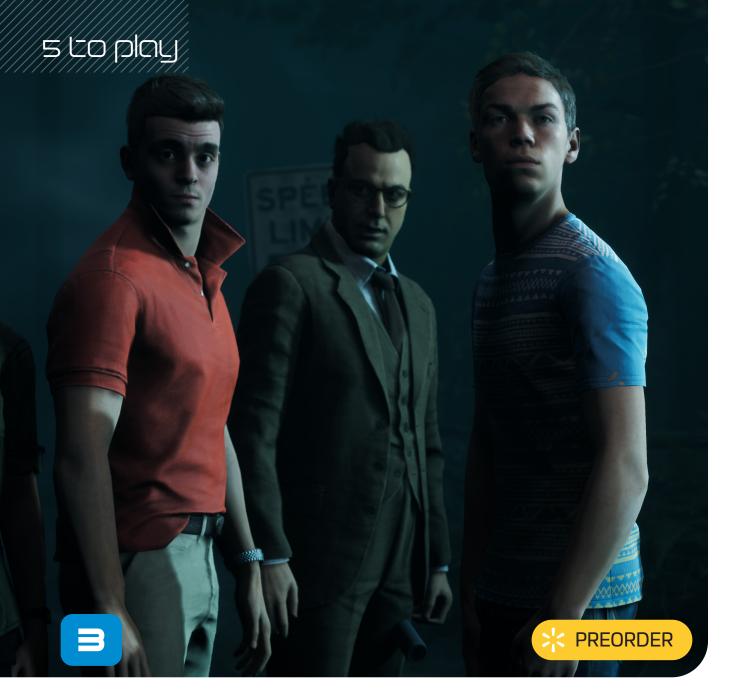












THE DARK PICTURES ANTHOLOGY: LITTLE HOPE

PUBLISHER BANDAI NAMCO ENTERTAINMENT AMERICA INC. / DEVELOPER SUPERMASSIVE GAMES / PLATFORMS XBOX ONE, PS4, PC / RELEASE DATE 10.30.2020

"The Dark Pictures Anthology is a series of standalone, branching cinematic horror games where the choices you make determine the outcome and the fate of the characters. In Little Hope, four college students and their professor become stranded in an isolated town after their bus crashes in bad weather. Trapped by a mysterious fog, they search desperately for a means of escape whilst terrifying visions from the past haunt them from the shadows. In terms of the gameplay, one of the biggest changes from the first game is that while we use a fixed camera for certain shots, we also, in certain scenes, added a 360-degree camera, which means the player can get a more in-depth look at the environment they are in. We also added context-sensitive exploration icons, which will give you a better sense of what you can do with that item when you are exploring an environment."

// DAN MCDONALD, SERIES PRODUCER, SUPERMASSIVE GAMES

"Trapped by a mysterious fog, they search desperately for a means of escape whilst terrifying visions from the past haunt them from the shadows."

THEIR FLESH IS YOUR ARMOR

MORTAL SHELL

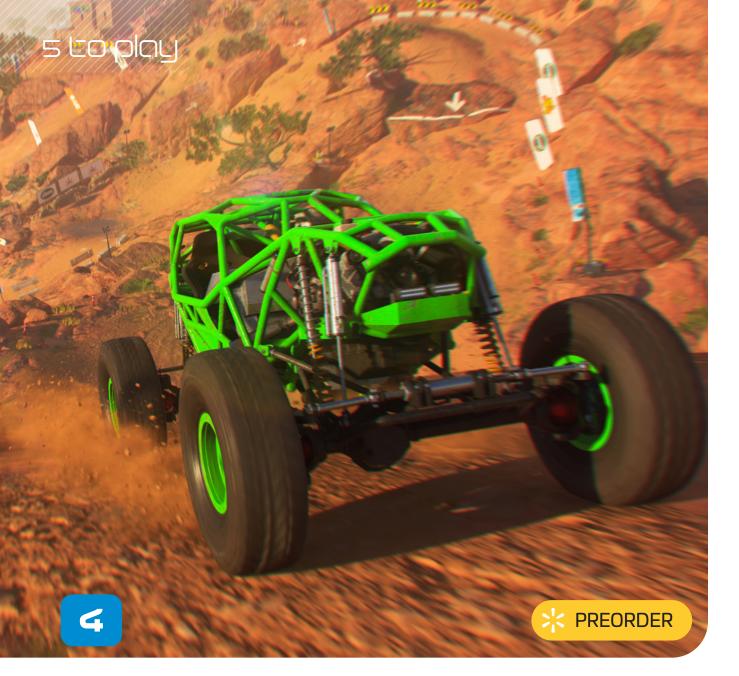


10/23/2020









DIRT5

PUBLISHER CODEMASTERS / DEVELOPER CODEMASTERS / PLATFORMS XBOX SERIES X/S, PS5, XBOX ONE, PS4, PC / RELEASE DATE 11.06.2020 (XBOX ONE, PS4, PC), 11.10.2020 (XBOX SERIES X/S), TBD 2020 (PS5)

"The *DIRT* franchise is a series of off-road racing games. While *DiRT* Rally and *DiRT* Rally 2.0 were hardcore sim-focused rally games, *DiRT* 1 through 5 are more laid-back off-road racing experiences that are all about having fun. But *DIRT* 5 is also a brand-new game; it's not built on the back of *DiRT* 4. *DIRT* 5 is a bolder, brasher, more colorful experience, with a huge variety of event types, an incredibly diverse range of vehicles, as well as a dynamic weather system that's just incredible. You can be driving along on a beautiful sunny day, when, all of a sudden, the weather takes a turn for the worst and you're in the middle of a thunderstorm, a sand storm, or in heavy snow. These effects aren't just visual, though. Corners become harder to navigate, and with less grip you really need to stop your back end from sliding out."

"DIRT 5 is a bolder, brasher, more colorful experience, with a huge variety of event types."

/ ROBERT KARP, DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR, CODEMASTERS

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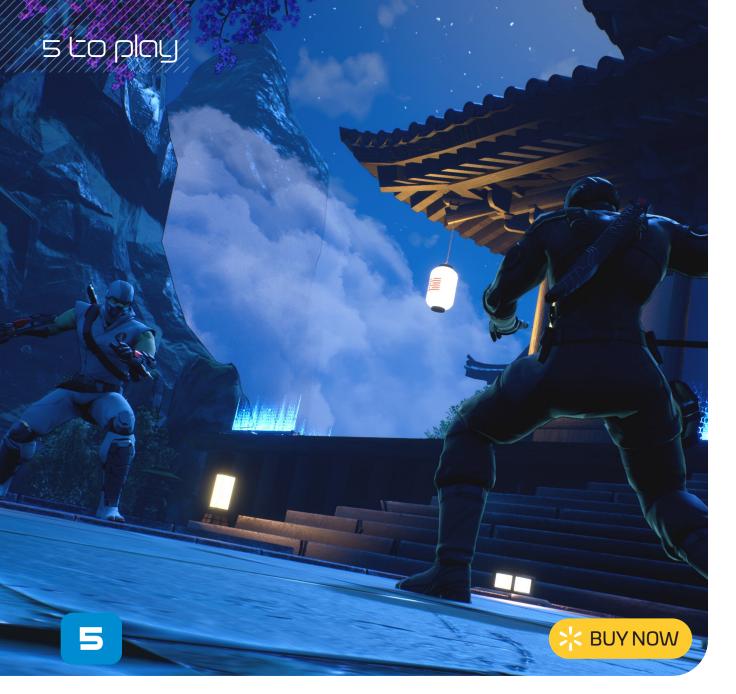












G.I. JOE: OPERATION BLACKOUT

PUBLISHER GAMEMILL ENTERTAINMENT / DEVELOPER IGUANABEE / PLATFORMS XBOX ONE, PS4, SWITCH / RELEASE DATE 10.13.2020

"G.I. Joe: Operation Blackout is a fast-paced, team-based, third-person shooter where you play as your favorite characters from Team G.I. Joe and Team Cobra. We took special care treating each character with the respect they deserved: in their dialogues, actions, and even their gestures. In G.I. Joe, rather than revolving around a particular character, the dynamics have always been teamwork, and how the team solves situations, so that's why in G.I. Joe: Operation Blackout, we decided to give the opportunity to play it cooperatively. We wanted to bring to the game both the tactical spirit and the energy of G.I. Joe battles, so we designed this as a non-usual third-person shooter. Here, you'll have a fast-paced game, with active cover mechanics, special maneuvers based on your class, and ultimate powers created for each character. It's an interesting mix that we're proud of."

"We took special care treating each character with the respect they deserved: in their dialogues, actions, and even their gestures."

/ DANIEL WINKLER, CEO & CREATIVE DIRECTOR, IGUANABEE



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*Battery life varies significantly with additional accessories, usage, and other factors. Testing conducted by Microsoft using preproduction units. xbox.com/elitebattery. Xbox Accessories app features – including button mapping and profile configuration – are only available on Xbox One and Windows 10. Compatible with Xbox Series X, Xbox Series S, Xbox One X, Xbox One S, Xbox One, Windows 10, Android, iOS. Operating system updates: may be required. Go to xbox.com/xboxone/controller-OS for more information.



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Experience varying levels of force and tension as you interact with your in-game gear and environments. From pulling back an increasingly tight bowstring to hitting the brakes on a speeding car, feel physically connected to your on-screen actions.

¹Available when feature is supported by game.



NINTENDO SWITCH™ LITE

Introducing Nintendo Switch[™] Lite, a new version of the Nintendo Switch system that's optimized for personal, handheld play. Nintendo Switch Lite is a small and light Nintendo Switch system at a great price. With a built-in +Control Pad, and a sleek, unibody design, Nintendo Switch Lite is great for on-the-go gaming. Nintendo Switch Lite is compatible with popular games such as Super Mario Odyssey[™], Mario Kart[™] 8 Deluxe, Super Smash Bros. [™] Ultimate, The Legend of Zelda[™]: Breath of the Wild, and more. If you're looking for a gaming system all your own, Nintendo Switch Lite is ready to hit the road whenever you are.

TURTLE BEACH® RECON 70 GAMING HEADSET FOR NINTENDO SWITCH™

Built for your next victory, your latest achievement and much more is the Recon 70 gaming headset for Nintendo Switch." The lightweight and comfortable design is perfect for hours of play, and the high-quality 40mm speakers and over-ear premium synthetic leather cushions let you hear every crisp high and thundering low while blocking noise. The high-sensitivity mic ensures you are heard clearly on Switch games that support in-game chat capability, and it easily flips up to mute. Also works great with PlayStation. Xbox, PC, and compatible mobile devices.



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Games, a value worth up to \$49.99.

STEELSERIES RIVAL 3 WIRELESS GAMING MOUSE

The Rival 3 Wireless utilizes Quantum
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a performance-focused gaming sensor, 60
million click mechanical switches, on-board
memory and more, the Rival 3 provides
performance with maximum versatility.

NINTENDO SWITCH - NEON BLUE/RED

Nintendo Switch is the hybrid home video game system from Nintendo. In addition to providing single and multiplayer thrills at home, the Nintendo Switch system can be taken on the go so players can enjoy a full home console experience anytime, anywhere. The mobility of a

handheld is now added to the power of a home gaming system, with unprecedented new play styles brought to life by the two new Joy-Con controllers.





WD_BLACK™ P10 GAME DRIVE WITH FREE PC GAME

The WD_Black™ P10 Game Drive gives your console or PC the performance-enhancing tools it needs to keep your competitive edge. It's a top-tier 2TB external HDD, built specifically for gamers looking to expand the potential of their console or PC by saving their game library in an on-the-go form factor. With the purchase of this special edition 2TB WD_BLACK P10 Game Drive, you get to pick 1 free PC game from Nacon Games, a value worth up to \$49.99.



SANDISK® 128GB MICROSDXC™ MEMORY CARD FOR NINTENDO SWITCH™

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GREAT **POWER** While Miles Morales shares many of his abilities with Peter Parkerboth Spider-Men can climb walls, sling webs, and rely on a Spider Sense to warn them of danger—he also has a few neat tricks of his He's got his own Spider-Man suit own. First, he can channel his enera stylish black-and-red outfit that gy into an attack known as Venom Strike, which stuns anyone it hits. It remixes his look from the comics appears that Miles will have access to a number of special attacks that and a full set of powers. make use of Venom Strike. Some will allow him to target a single opponent, while others will be great for crowd control, knocking an entire group of enemies into the air so he can follow up with acrobatic combos. Miles' other distinct ability is a form of camouflage, which allows him to blend in with his surroundings so well he's effectively invisible. We know you'll have access to this power, but we haven't seen much of it in action yet. Still, given that the first Marvel's Spider-Man included segments where Peter Miles is a much Parker had to (or at least could) more inexperienced use stealth to pick off opponents hero than Peter was quietly, it's easy to imagine Miles' at the start of the camouflage coming into play in last game. similar segments. ith the 2018 release of Now, Miles is finally taking the **FACT FILE** Marvel's Spider-Man, spotlight in a standalone spin-off. PUBLISHER developer Insomniac Set one year after the events of the SONY INTERACTIVE Games came out swinging. Not only previous game, Marvel's Spider-Man: ENTERTAINMENT did the studio deliver a fresh take Miles Morales sees our title character DEVELOPER coming into his own. He's got his on familiar characters and storylines INSOMNIAC GAMES from the world of the comics, it also own Spider-Man suit—a stylish black-PLATFORMS managed to craft a story that, by its and-red outfit that remixes his look PS5. PS4 end, included two different Spiderfrom the comics-and a full set of RELEASE DATE Men. Peter Parker, the original and powers that allow him, just like Peter, 11.12.2020 most iconic web-slinger, teamed up to do whatever a spider can. In fact, with the optimistic teen Miles Mohe's got a few special abilities of his

rales to unravel the game's myster-

bite later, Miles had powers of his

own-though he was still a hero-in-

part expansion.

november

2020

ies. One genetically enhanced spider

training, even at the end of the three-

29

own (see sidebar "Great Power").

When the game begins, Miles has

moved into East Harlem, where he's

working to define his identity, both

hero. Based on our early look at the

as a young adult and as a super-

cover story

GREAT RESPONSIBILITY

Miles Morales got his start in the Ultimate Marvel line of comics, which took place on an alternate version of Earth and aimed to update several of the company's heroes for a 21st century audience. After being bitten by a spider that had been genetically enhanced by Oscorp, a teenage Miles discovered he had the powers of Spider-Man-already an established hero in his universe. Almost as quickly, he decided he wasn't cut out for heroics. That changed when Peter Parker died in a fight with the Green Goblin, leaving Miles no choice but to become Spider-Man himself.



Since then he's done battle with his own slate of villains and even transitioned into the main-stream Marvel universe.

Just as important as what Miles accomplished on the page, however, was what he accomplished in the real world. When Miles debuted back in 2011, he stood for more than just another comicbook hero. He was also a young Black kid taking on the mantle of one of Marvel's biggest heroes. Given the ongoing conversations surrounding representation in media, it's no doubt an equally important moment for Miles to take the starring role in a video game and not just any video game, but perhaps the highest-profile launch title for the PlayStation 5.



It looks like **Insomniac Games** has put in special effort to bring the **neighborhood and its culture** to life in **much greater detail** than the first game.

game, it seems Insomniac Games has put in special effort to bring the neighborhood and its culture to life in much greater detail than the first game. All of Manhattan, in fact, has undergone a substantial makeover. While the buildings and streets may be the same, the shift to a wintertime setting should make web-slinging through the open world fresh and inviting. After all, who doesn't love familiar holiday traditions like walking through the snow, looking at all the decorations downtown, and pummeling bad guys in buttery-smooth, rhythmic combat?

Speaking of bad guys, Miles will also have a new slate of villains to contend with. The primary threat to the city comes from a war between two opposing factions. On one side are the security forces of the energy company Roxxon, which is promising to bring clean power to the entire city with NuForm, a recently discovered but highly volatile kind of energy. (Just how volatile? Let's just say we've already seen a single explosion collapse an entire bridge.) On the other side of the fight is a gang of high-tech criminals called the Underground, led by a supervillain

The Underground uses tech that will will make them fear-some fighters—as well as glowy purple targets—in combat.





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BEST WIRELESS GAMING HEADSET ARCTIS 7



BEST OVERALL GAMING HEADSET ARCTIS 7

Trusted A Review

BEST WIRELESS
GAMING HEADSET

PCGAMER

BEST GAMING HEADSET

EUROGAMER

cover story

TINKERING WITH THE TINKERER



The main villain—or at least one of the main villains-in Marvel's Spider-Man: Miles Morales will be the Tinkerer. In the mainline comics universe, the Tinkerer is Phineas Mason, an unassuming old man who uses his mastery of mechanical engineering to power a life of crime, frequently appearing to assist other supervillains by upgrading their equipment. In the Ultimates universe where Miles originates, the Tinkerer is a younger man named Elijah Stern, a disgruntled former employee of Roxxon's research division who was fired while on the verge of discovering an experimental power source.

Given what we know about the game's story, it seems entirely plausible that the Ultimates version is the one that most closely inspires this new take on the villain. There will be at least one major difference, however: Barring any shenanigans by the developers, the Tinkerer in Spider-Man: Miles Morales is definitely a woman.

One more interesting bit of backstory may be worth noting here: In the comics, Stern was eventually killed by Prowler—a villain with a deeply personal connection to Miles. (We won't spoil it for you, but if you've seen Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse you know what we mean.) Could it be that Prowler will make an appearance in the game as well? It'd certainly make for a compelling twist in a story centered on Miles' journey toward becoming a hero in his own right.



known as the Tinkerer. While Spiderfans may recognize that name, it appears Insomniac has continued the tradition of putting its own spin on the comics, so expect to be surprised by this incarnation of the character (see sidebar "Tinkering with the Tinkerer").

Perhaps most
exciting for
comics readers
is the debut of
Ganke Lee, Miles'
close friend and
confidant.

Much like Peter relied on his family and friends for support in the first game, Miles will enlist the help of some allies of his own. Perhaps most exciting for comics readers is the debut of Ganke Lee, Miles' close friend and confidant, and one of the few people who know his secret identity. Also returning is Rio Morales, Miles' mother, whose run for city council looks to play a key role in the narrative.

While Marvel's Spider-Man: Miles Morales will launch alongside the PlayStation 5 this November, you won't need to upgrade to next-gen to enjoy the experience. The game will also arrive on PlayStation 4 on the same day, and Sony is offering players who buy that version a chance to

Ganke Lee is one of Miles' closest allies—he's even in the loop about the whole Spider-Man thing.

If there isn't a mission where Miles puts on a Santa hat to deliver presents by web, we quit video games forever.













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cover story

THE STORY SO FAR

If you missed out on the original Marvel's Spider-Man or just want to revisit Peter Parker's story. you're in luck. Sony and Insomniac Games have announced Marvel's Spider-Man: Miles Morales Ultimate Edition will include the first game and all three of its DLC chapters, remastered for the Play-Station 5. The experience will go beyond what you'll get if you play the PS4 version through backward compatibility. Insomniac promises updated visuals, including better-looking character models, improved facial animation, and support for new technologies like ray-traced reflections and ambient



shadows. The world itself will also feel a bit more alive, thanks to the addition of more pedestrians and vehicles and greater draw distance.

Other PS5-exclusive features include near-instant load times, 3D audio, full support for the advanced haptic feedback of the DualSense controller, and a performance mode that lets you target a smooth 60 frames per second. As if that wasn't enough, *Marvel's Spider-Man: Remastered* even gets some entirely original content in the form of three new suits for Spidey, an improved Photo Mode, and new PlayStation trophies.





later upgrade to the PS5 edition at no extra cost.

Still, there's no question that Insomniac wants the game to be a showcase for the power of next-gen. On PS5, you can expect faster loading and greatly improved graphics, including real-time ray-tracing effects that will enable impressive reflections in the puddles and gleaming skyscrapers. The game will also take advantage of other PS5 features, like immersive 3D audio and improved haptic feedback on the new DualSense controller. Instead of standard rumble effects that can't do much more than vary in intensity, with the DualSense you'll actually be able to feel the bioelectricity course through the controller as you use Miles' Venom Strike abilities.

When Miles camouflages, you'll still be able to see his outline—otherwise it might be kind of hard to play. Of course, no matter what version you pick up, you'll still be able to experience the full gameplay and story of this next chapter in Insomniac's marvelous *Spider-Man* universe. And this is just the start, since the studio is already promising future adventures down the road. Could the full-fledged Parker/Morales team-up of our dreams be far off?

There's no question that **Insomniac** wants the game to be a showcase for the **power of next-gen**.

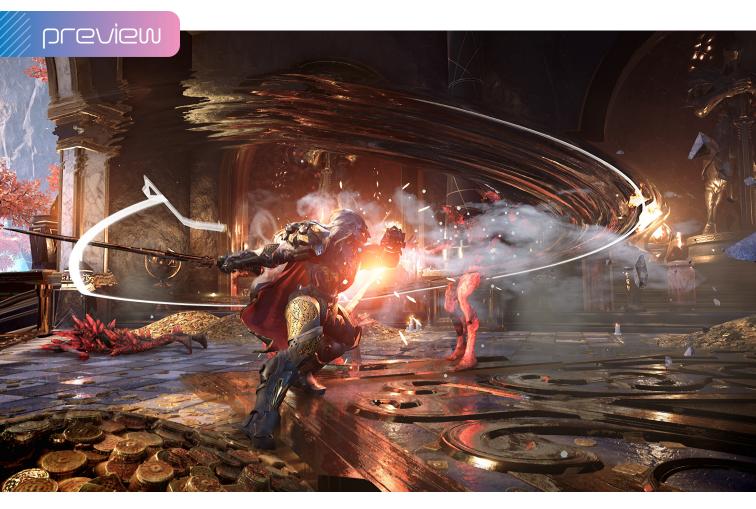


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god Macros, who wants to destroy Aperion.

"We thought to ourselves, 'How can we merge third-person melee combat with our love for loot-driven RPGs, and can we create a game where it's somewhere in the middle—one part gear driven, and one part skill driven?' The time you invest is

for cool loot and rewards, but you are also learning to become a master of the game," Lee said.

In other words, Godfall is looking to combine the loot-based gameplay loop of Destiny with the high-octane action of Devil May Cry, meaning that the level of your gear doesn't matter if you don't have the skills to take ad-

■ Godfall's five
weapon types—
Longswords, Dual
Blades, Polearms,
Warhammers, and
Greatswords—afford
different playstyles.

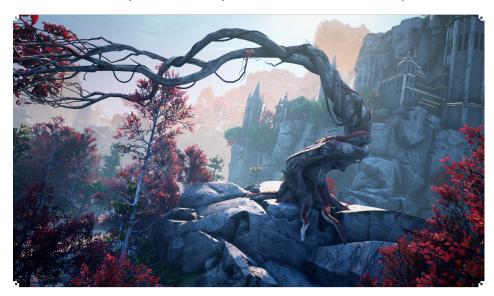
vantage of that gear. You'll also find resources to build new Valorplates, the armor sets that give your character unique special abilities that can turn the tide of a fight in an instant.

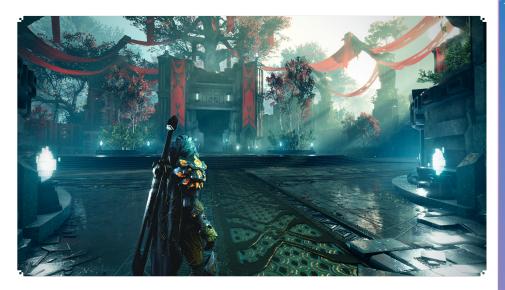
Aperion is made up of five different elemental realms: Earth, Fire, Water, Air, and Spirit. Starting in Earth Realm, players will fight their way to the Inner Sanctum, where they will forge their gear and take on new missions.

"This location becomes a player's own personal hub throughout their experience in Aperion," Lee explained. "From Sanctum, players

"We thought to ourselves, 'How can we merge third-person melee combat with our love for loot-driven RPGs?"

KEITH LEE, COUNTERPLAY GAMES
FOUNDER AND CEO





can choose to play available mainstory missions that will drive players through the realm, or Hunt missions that will provide players additional content that they can replay at any time during their experience."

When building and leveling a character, considering what realm you're in—whether that's Earth, Fire, Water, Air, or Spirit—is key to surviving, according to Lee.

"In practice, this means that all your weapons will have elemental traits and your enemies will have an elemental nature," Lee said. "Figuring out the best way to maximize your own elemental traits to face the

challenges of each encounter will be essential to the nature of character building and combat in *Godfall*."

As far as console exclusives go, Godfall is a bold bet—a skill-based action RPG that has to appeal to as many new PlayStation 5 owners as possible. But Counterplay thinks that it's up to the challenge.

"Our game is challenging, yet we want to make it accessible and intuitive for players," Lee said. "When we combine the loot and action elements, it allows players to sculpt and mold their own individual playstyles. We want people to have their own fingerprint with how they play." ©

■ The PS5's raytracing makes the world of Aperion a visual stunner with its volumetric lighting and reflections.

SAVING APERION...WITH FRIENDS!

Sure, you can save Aperion as a lonely Valorian Knight, but you can also play *Godfall* with up to two other players in online co-op.

Since Godfall is a loot-based action RPG, making sure that all players have a balanced co-op experience was a priority for developer Counterplay Games, according to founder and CEO Keith Lee.

"One thing to note is that loot is instanced for each player," Lee said. "No one will have to rush to ninja-loot something before their friends get to it."

Co-op also opens up more room to experiment with different builds and how a team's makeup can benefit them in tougher fights.

"Playing co-op allows players to create great synergy with how they each uniquely set up their Valorplate and loadout," Lee said. "Everyone can take a DPS (damage per second) approach, or you can mix and match roles, and really define what each member in your party wants to do during your playthrough."



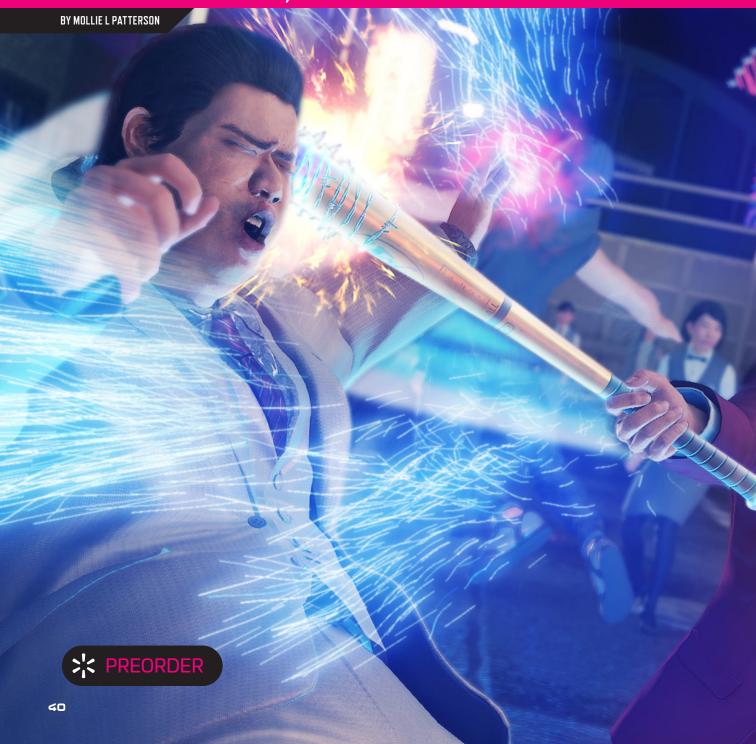
november zozo



YAKUZA: KEADRAGON FLOAT LIKE A BUTTERFLY, BITE LIKE A DRAGON

FACT FILE

PUBLISHER SEGA DEVELOPER RYU GA GOTOKU STUDIO **PLATFORMS** XBOX SERIES X/S, PS5. XBOX ONE, PS4, PC RELEASE DATE 11.10.2020 (PS5 TBD)



ver since the original game's debut back in 2006, Sega's Yakuza franchise has stood tall as one of Japan's most beloved and engrossing open-world franchises. Time and time again, Toshihiro Nagoshi and his team at Ryu Ga Gotoku Studio have crafted games that mix humor and absurdity with a dark, serious, and gripping look at Japan's criminal underbelly. And, across seven main chapters and various spin-offs. one man has been there to lead us

ovember 2020

through it all: Kazuma Kiryu.

Now, with Yakuza: Like a Dragon, everything we've known is about to change. Instead of Tokyo's Kamurocho, we'll be roaming the streets of Yokohama's red light district. Rather than jumping into combat via the previous games' more actionoriented battle system, fights here will play out more akin to turn-based RPGs. And, in what might be one of the biggest changes for fans, Kiryu has faced a fate many of us fear:

Yakuza: Like a Dragon offers the same themes and craziness of the Yakuza series in a more RPG-esque package

being replaced by someone younger and hotter.

"The world of the Yakuza series is driven by the strength of its characters, and changing the protagonist has caused a shift in its very principles," explained series chief producer Masayoshi Yokoyama. "Kazuma Kiryu was the kind of character who believed only in his own abilities, and he would often recklessly charge at his enemies. But when Ichiban Kasuga is put into the same situation, there's a dramatic difference."

While we're definitely sad to see Kiryu step aside, Ichiban promises to





will have to rely on the friendship of a new cast of characters, each of whom will have something unique to offer both in and out of fights. (It's a good thing, then, that Ichiban is far better at making friends than Kiryu was, thanks in part to his upbeat, charismatic nature.)

Those friends then lead into one of *Yakuza*: *Like a Dragon*'s next

big changes: its combat. Instead of real-time slugfests, getting into fights here means using a turn-based, menu-driven battle system that sees you issue commands to Ichiban and his recruits. Still, this is a *Yakuza* game, so the team wanted to make sure it built that system atop the signature style and real-time physics of previous games.

"During a battle, not only do your characters and the enemies move in real time, but so does the battlefield," Yokoyama told us. "If a car drives by, you can get run over, and if you launch an enemy, they can collide with everything in the vicinity, causing signs to break or other items to fly off and even potentially injure the other combatants."

■ Ichiban will face off against a lot of powerful people without the clout Kiryu carried.



"Even though it may come as a shock to fans of the series, we decided to be brave and change the game itself."

SERIES CHIEF PRODUCER MASAYOSHI YOKOYAMA





Who hasn't wanted to win RPG battles by having a hostess spray the enemy with deadly champagne.

"Our goal was to establish a new command-based battle system rooted in the 'action game' method of physically calculating each action in real time, rather than a system that judges all its results the moment you enter a command and then plays it back like a movie," he added.

Those changes, and more, may definitely come as a shock to longtime Yakuza fans when they finally

sit down with Yakuza: Like a Dragon this November. And yet, after seven games all based on the same core experience, a shock may just be what the series needs most.

"Even though it may come as a shock to fans of the series, we decided to be brave and change the game itself," said Yokoyama. "Because, we knew that it had to be done." G



CHOOSING A CAREER



Depending on the setting, your typical RPG might offer you the chance to play as a knight, a wizard, a medic, a hunter, a thief, or a summoner.

Of course, Yakuza: Like a Dragon is not your typical RPG. When coming up with choices for the game's jobs system, the Ryu Ga Gotoku team wanted to find classes that would not only make sense in modern-day Japan, but also be fitting to the mythos of the Yakuza series.

"Essentially, we adopted professions such as hosts, hostesses, fortune tellers, etc. That may seem strange, but they really do fit right into a world set in a nightlife entertainment district," series chief producer Masayoshi Yokoyama told us. "Then we took those jobs and applied them to the roles typically employed in RPGs to finalize the [concept]."

In an interesting twist reminiscent of previous Yakuza collaborations, players can change their characters' jobs in Yakuza: Like a Dragon at Hello Work, a virtual representation of the real-life Employment Service Center run by the Japanese government.

"We wanted to show that given the chance and with enough drive, even characters who are outcasts of society like Ichiban and his friends can change their career path," added Yokoyama.

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FACT FILE

PUBLISHER
IO INTERACTIVE
DEVELOPER
IO INTERACTIVE
PLATFORMS
XBOX SERIES X/S, PS5,
XBOX ONE, PS4, PC
RELEASE
01.20.2021

he story of Agent 47 is the story of the recent *Hitman* games. Just like Agent 47, developer IO Interactive has used its cunning and available resources against all odds to complete its mission. In this case, its mission is rounding out the series' recent trilogy with *Hitman 3*.

Despite facing a breakup with its original publisher and a somewhat polarizing serialized release model for 2016's *Hitman*, the newly independent IO Interactive ended up creating arguably the best games in its long-running series. The first two parts of the "World of Assassination" trilogy introduced several new mechanics and modes, such as Mission Stories and Elusive Targets, as well as the richest and most interactive environments in *Hitman* history.

That's all to say that *Hitman 3* has a very strong foundation to build

upon when it launches on January 20th for current- and next-gen consoles. But IO Interactive seemingly isn't content to rest on its laurels. In some ways, this could be the most experimental *Hitman* yet.

So far, IO has revealed two locations for *Hitman 3*: a cloud-touching skyscraper in Dubai and the foggy English countryside of Dartmoor, the latter of which will host one of the most interesting missions on which Agent 47 has ever embarked. Centering around a murder that takes place at Dartmoor's Thornbridge Manor, the mission allows Agent 47 to disguise himself as a world-



Hitman 3 has a very strong foundation to build upon when it launches on January 20th for current- and next-qen consoles.

Agent 47's head has never looked as smooth or as shiny as it will on

next-gen.

renowned inspector and solve the murder while also stalking his target.

While those are the only locations that we've seen so far, the last two games had at least six missions each (plus *Hitman 2*'s excellent duo of DLC missions), so we're expecting *Hitman 3* will follow suit. What we do know are what modes will be available, and *Hitman 3* is looking to be a strictly solo experience, at least at launch.

IO has confirmed that the 1v1 Ghost Mode will not be in *Hitman 3* at launch, and the Sniper Assassin missions will no longer be playable with other players. However, the developer has stated that it's learned a lot from Ghost Mode and hinted that it's working on a new way to

bring multiplayer to the World of Assassination.

Instead, Hitman 3 is refining the standout modes from the previous two titles. Not only do the standard story missions look bigger and more complex than ever, but Escalation and Elusive Targets are both getting some love. Elusive Targets, in particular, will see some changes that will make them a little more user-friendly while also retaining their intense sense of challenge.

Hitman 3 is shaping up to be one of the better launch-window titles for the next-gen consoles, but it's also going to be available on current-gen consoles when it launches in early 2021.

HITMAN VR

One of the most exciting things about *Hitman 3* is that it's launching with VR support—at least on PlayStation VR. Players will be able to experience not just *Hitman 3* in VR, but all of the missions from the last two games as well.

To work with a standard gamepad, *Hitman VR* will have a "prime" mechanic that will determine how you interact with the world. Holding R2 will "prime" Agent 47 to perform specific actions. It's the difference between tapping a guard on the shoulder and "priming" your hand into a fist and punching said guard in the jaw.

Certain actions will also require more player interaction. Instead of pressing a button to blend in by, say, cleaning a countertop when disguised as a sushi chef, *Hitman VR* players will "prime" a cleaning rag and physically wipe down the countertop. It's just one of those little touches that will help make *Hitman VR* a more immersive experience than before.







GOTHAM KNIGHTS

WATCHFUL PROTECTORS

BY JOSH HARMON

FACT FILE

PUBLISHER
WARNER BROS. GAMES
DEVELOPER
WB GAMES MONTRÉAL
PLATFORMS
XBOX SERIES X/S, PS5,
XBOX ONE, PS4, PC
RELEASE DATE
TBD 2021

ruce Wayne is dead. The billionaire who (quite literally) moonlighted as Batman has perished, and his Batcave is in ruins. Now it's all up to the family of heroes he inspired and trained to save Gotham from a mysterious new threat.

That's where *Gotham Knights*, the next game from *Batman: Arkham Origins* studio WB Games Montréal, kicks off. As Batgirl, Robin, Red Hood, and Nightwing, players will take to the streets and rooftops of Gotham to save the day. Rather than continuing the universe of the Arkham games, this is a fresh take on the universe, which means you can no doubt expect a few big surprises.

On the gameplay front, the biggest change is support for two-player co-op and the addition of deeper role-playing elements. The latter shift means that each hero will have his or her own skill tree, learning new abilities throughout the game to round

out the melee and gadgetbased combat.

Enemies, too, will have their own levels, so not every foe you face will be equally dangerous.

Importantly, Gotham Knights isn't sacrificing what players expect from a big-budget Batgame in service of co-op and XP-based leveling. This Gotham is a true open world in the tradition of Arkham City and Arkham Knight, and you won't be gated off





from certain areas just because you're at too low a level. What's more, the less-social among us will be free to play the entire campaign solo, either swapping between heroes or sticking with a single character the whole way through.

The clean break with the past has also freed up WB Montréal to discover its own visual style, and the early glimpses we've seen remind us of the classic *Batman: The Animated Series* in all the best, most Art Deco-y ways. Judging by Mr. Freeze, the first recurring villain to be confirmed for the game, Gotham's most wanted

have also gotten fresh, imaginative makeovers.

While we don't know much about the larger story—honestly, we give it even odds ol' Bruce hasn't *really* kicked the bucket—we do know one enticing detail. Central to the story will be the Court of Owls, a mysterious society that marks a more recent addition to Batman's rogues' gallery, debuting in the comics in 2011.

We can't wait to find out more in the coming months as *Gotham Knights* gears up for release on current and next-gen consoles sometime next year. ©

With the Batcave destroyed, our heroes will instead operate out of the Belfry, a secret HQ at the top of the old Wayne Tower.

UNDER THE HOOD (AND COWL AND MASK)

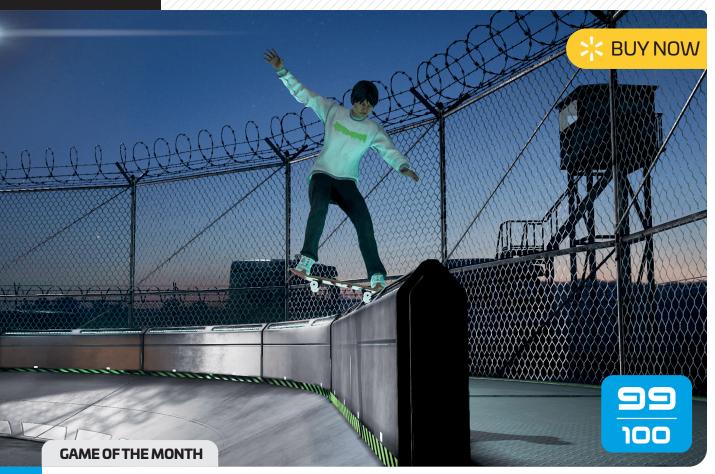
Because it's set in a new version of the Batman universe, Gotham City Knights also introduces a new slate of voice actors who'll bring its central heroes to life. Nightwing will be voiced by Christopher Sean, who previously lent his talents to Kazuda Xiono on Star Wars Resistance. Red Hood will be played by Stephen Oyoung, who superhero fans will recognize as Mr. Negative in the PS4-exclusive Marvel's Spider-Man. Up-andcomers Sloane Morgan Siegel and America Young will voice Robin and Batgirl, respectively.

Rounding out the cast are two allies (or at least one-time allies) of our central quartet. Gildart Jackson, who's acted on everything from Netflix's Castlevania to Freeform's The Bold Type, will be playing Alfred Pennyworth. Michael Antonakos, best known to gamers as Alexios in Assassin's Creed Odyssey, is the voice of Bruce Wayne—who, in case you've forgotten, is super dead.



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TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 1 + 2

PRETENDING I'M A SUPERMAN

BY JOSH HARMON

FACT FILE

PUBLISHER
ACTIVISION
DEVELOPER
VICARIOUS VISIONS
PLATFORMS
XBOX ONE, PS4, PC
RELEASE DATE
09.04.2020

he Tony Hawk's Pro Skater series has seen its ups and downs over the years—and we're not just talking about all the half-pipes. In looking to recapture the magic of the franchise's early days, Activision tapped Vicarious Visions—the same studio behind the stellar *Crash Bandicoot N. Sane Trilogy*—to remake the first two titles from the ground up in *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 1 + 2*. The result isn't just the best game in the series since *Tony Hawk's Underground 2*.



It might also end up as one of this year's best games, period.

If you're a nostalgic fan looking to revisit the glory days of virtual skateboarding, you'll be happy to know that *Pro Skater 1+2* hews closely to its source material in the ways that matter most. You'll get to experience all the original levels and skaters from the original games, as well as a robust park editor, character customization, and online play.

The visual upgrades are similarly spectacular. Loading into Warehouse or Hangar feels like coming home again after a long trip, only to discover that your house has undergone a gorgeous, big-budget remodel. Lighting effects and high-res textures bring the past and present together in an impressive visual display.



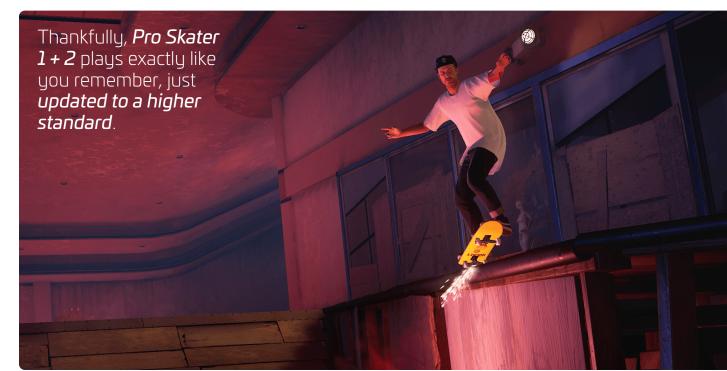
Of course, none of this would matter if Vicarious Visions had messed up the gameplay. (Indeed, *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater HD*, released in 2012, proved how much a remake can suffer if the action doesn't feel quite right.) Thankfully, *Pro Skater 1 + 2* plays exactly like you remember, just updated to a higher standard. The buttery-smooth framerate and tight controls mean you should be able to tap into that long-dormant muscle memory

and pull off impressive combos almost immediately—no rough edges or awkward compromises in sight.

Equally impressive is the way the game has been updated and expanded for newcomers with more modern expectations. In addition to the familiar objectives—finding the Hidden Tape on each level, topping high scores, and collecting all the S-K-A-T-E letters, for example—*Pro Skater 1 + 2* introduces nearly a

Even the drabbest areas, like the Gonz Rail corner of the School II level, are full of detail and life. thousand new challenges that task you with mastering every inch of the game. While they're entirely optional and unintrusive for those who prefer a classic experience, they're an excellent way to keep players coming back for dozens (if not hundreds) of hours of skating fun.

From top to bottom, there's no question *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 1+2* is the gold-standard remaster the series deserved. ©



november 2020

parting shots



REINHARD POLLICE

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER, KINGDOMS OF AMALUR: RE-RECKONING

When it originally hit in 2012, *Kingdoms of Amalur: Reckoning* made waves due to its huge collaboration of talent, featuring the work of names such as *Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion* designer Ken Rolston, bestselling author R.A. Salvatore, and *Spawn* creator Todd McFarlane. While such ambitious projects don't always make for great games, *Kingdoms of Amalur* was an engrossing RPG offering a deep story, interesting battle system, and large amount of player choice. Unfortunately, the game seemed like it might be lost to time—until now. Eight years after its original release, THQ Nordic has brought the game back as *Kingdoms of Amalur: Re-Reckoning*. To find out more about this exciting new remaster, we walked the Faelands with Reinhard Pollice, executive producer at THQ Nordic.

WGC: What was it about *Kingdoms of Amalur* that made it a great choice for bringing back as a remaster?

Reinhard Pollice: Kingdoms of Amalur sets itself apart from other RPGs in one very important way: player choice. Whether it's the manner in which the player chooses to progress through the game's narrative or the manner in which the player engages in combat, Kingdoms of Amalur: Re-Reckoning gives the player tremendous freedom of selection. In addition to this, Kingdoms of Amalur follows

an incredibly rich story with seemingly countless sidequests, and takes place in a massive, beautiful game world.

WGC: For our readers who have never played the original, is *Kingdoms of Amalur: Re-Reckoning* more for the RPG crowd, or would fans of other genres be able to appreciate it as well?

RP: We believe today's RPG gamers will definitely appreciate it as much as the players who first picked it up in 2012. That said, any player who appreciates deep player

We believe **today's RPG gamers** will definitely appreciate it as much as the players who first **picked it up in 2012**.

GAME HIGHLIGHTS

DARKSIDERS III, SPELLFORCE 3, WRECKFEST

OCCUPATION
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER, THO NORDIC

choice, character development, and strategic combat will find something to love in Kingdoms of Amalur: Re-Reckoning.

WGC: When working on Kingdoms of Amalur: Re-Reckoning, was the goal to be as faithful to the original game as possible, or has work been done to improve or expand elements such as gameplay? RP: Kingdoms of Amalur: Re-Reckoning is a remaster in the purest sense of the term. It is one of those games that was not only revolutionary at the time of its release, but somehow transcendent in terms of its unique and compelling gameplay and the lore that it is wrapped in. Upgrades since the game's release in 2012 include the graphical and visual effects improvements that the leap to PlayStation 4, Xbox One, and high-powered PCs delivers. Players can look forward to [a completely new] expansion to the Kingdoms of Amalur universe when we release Fatesworn in 2021.

WGC: Kingdoms of Amalur: Re-Reckoning not only includes the base game, but also all of the released DLCs as well. Can you talk a little about what those add to the experience?

RP: The original Kingdoms of Amalur experience was extended with a lot of DLC over the years. We are packing it all into the Re-Reckoning release, from Teeth of Naros to Dead Kel and more!

WGC: Kingdoms of Amalur: Re-Reckoning lets players specialize in one of three classes: Finesse, Might, and Sorcery. If a fourth class was added to the game based on your life, what would players find when choosing that class?

RP: Hmmm. That's a fun question. I guess I consider myself pretty good at thinking on my feet and finding creative solutions to problems so maybe the fourth class would be the Shrewd class. This class would be particularly adept at knowing when and how to most efficiently leverage the weapons and powers at their disposal to advance quickly.



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PLAYS GREAT ALSO ON XBOX SERIES X AND PS5



